

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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SUBJECT VISIT OF OAPEC SPOKESMEN YAMANI AND ABDESSELAM

SUMMARY: OAPEC EMISSARIES ABDESSELAM OF ALGERIA AND YAMANI OF SAUDI ARABIA HAD FULL SCHEDULE DURING THEIR TWO-DAY STOP IN PARIS, INCLUDING MEETINGS WITH FONMIN JOBERT, MININDUSTRY CHARBONNEL, AND PRESIDENT POMPIDOU AS WELL AS TWO PRESS CONFERENCES. VISIT HAS BEEN EXHAUSTIVELY COVERED BY PRESS, AND TOUGH LINE TAKEN BY OAPEC SPOKESMEN HAS BEEN WELL AIRED. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, GOV TOOK OPPORTUNITY OF VISITS TO CAUTION ARABS AGAINST PROVOCATIVE USE OF THEIR OIL WEAPON. END SUMMARY

2. ABDESSELAM AND YAMANI HELD PRESS CONFERENCE EVENING OF NOVEMBER

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26 IN WHICH THEY LAID OUT GENERAL LINE THEY HAVE FOLLOWED HERE:

EUROPEAN OIL CONSUMERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN SPECIAL TREATMENT WITH RESPECT TO NEXT 5-0/0 CUTBACKS, BUT FUTURE EASING OF CUTBACKS WILL DEPEND ON WHATEVER FURTHER STEPS EUROPEANS TAKE TO EFFECT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL OR OTHERWISE HELP ARABS. ACCORDING TO YAMANI, ANOTHER EC DECLARATION ALONE "WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH" TO EASE ARAB CUTBACKS. ARAB SPOKESMEN CALLED REPEATEDLY ON EUROPE TO ASSUME ACTIVE ROLE, VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL AND U.S., BUT DECLINED TO INDICATE WHAT ACTIONS ARABS WANTED TAKEN. ABDESSELAM SAID DURING PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE "COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT EUROPE WAS WITHOUT INFLUENCE" IN PEACE EFFORTS, AND WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT HE "WOULD NOT BE SHOCKED TO SEE EUROPE INTERVENE MILITARILY." ONLY INDICATION OF RELAXATION IN OTHERWISE HARD LINE TAKEN BY SPOKESMEN TOWARD EUROPE'S DESIRE FOR EASING OF OIL CUTBACKS WAS MENTIONED BY YAMANI THAT EC PARTNERS AFFECTED BY LOSS OF OIL WHICH IN PAST HAD TRANSITED ROTTERDAM COULD COME DIRECTLY TO SAUDI ARABIA OR ALGERIA FOR REPLACEMENT SUPPLIES.

2. ACCORDING TO (PRESUMABLY GOF-INSPIRED) PRESS REPORT, JOBERT AND POMPIDOU TOOK CAUTIONING LINE IN RETURN WITH ARAB EMISSARIES. ASKING YAMANI AND ABDESSELAM WHAT ARABS HOPED TO GAIN BY "PUNISHING-EUROPE WHEN FRIENDSHIP OF EC GOVERNMENTS WAS NECESSARY TO HELP BRING INFLUENCE ON SUPERPOWERS, GOF OFFICIALS CAUTIONED THEM AGAINST POSSIBLE EUROPEAN REACTIONS, PARTICULARLY IF ARABS AIMED BY THEIR DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO DIVIDE THE EC. SPOKESMEN'S ANSWER WAS TO ARGUE THAT ARABS HELD NO ARGUMENT AGAINST EUROPE, BUT THAT THEY WANTED EUROPE'S FRIENDSHIP TO BE PROVEN BY ACTION. FRENCH ARGUMENTS APPEARED TO MAKE LITTLE HEADWAY WITH THEIR VISITORS WHO MAINTAINED THEIR HARD LINE THROUGHOUT VISITS. AS RESULTS, GOF SPOKESMAN HAVE BEEN URGING PRESS TO LOOK UPON ARAB SPOKESMEN'S EUROPEAN TRIP AND ITS RESULTS AS A WHOLE RATHER THAN TO EXPECT SPECIFIC RESULTS AT FIRST STOP.

3. YAMANI'S OFFER TO SUPPLY COMPENSATORY OIL TO EC CUSTOMERS (OTHER THAN DUTCH) WHO HAVE LOST SUPPLIES FORMERLY TRANSITING HOLLAND REMAINS UNCLEAR. UNLESS OVERALL PRODUCTION CURBS RELAXED TO MAKE THESE QUANTITIES AVAILABLE, EFFECT WOULD IN ANY EVENT BE ONLY marginally helpful. YAMANI WARNED THAT OPEC WOULD HAVE TO "TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES" IF ITS EMBARGO ON SUPPLIES TO NETHERLANDS WERE EFFECTED, PRESUMABLY BY TRANSHIPMENT OR DIVERSION.

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IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, YAMANI AND ABDESSELAM ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE EUROPEAN OIL CONSUMERS THAT, OVER LONG-TERM, OPEC SUPPLIERS WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER NEW AND FAVORABLE OIL SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS IF THEY ACTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRESENT OPEC WISHES. FRANCE, OF COURSE, SINGLE OUT FOR SPECIAL NOTE, IT WOULD "ALWAYS REMAIN A PRIVILEGED COUNTRY" AS FAR AS THE ARABS ARE CONCERNED, AS ABDESSELAM SAID AFTER LEAVING MEETING WITH POMPIDOU.

4. OAPEC SPOKESMEN, PARTICULARLY YAMANI, DEVELOPED AT SOME LENGTH (DURING TV NEWS CONFERENCE) ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS FOR ARAB OIL CUTBACKS, SAYING THAT PRODUCTION RESTRICTIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN INEVITABLE IN ANY EVENT. BOTH STRESSED THAT FURTHER ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN OIL CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS WOULD HAVE TO SATISFY LATTER'S INDUSTRIALIZATION, DEVELOPMENT, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, AND OTHER NATIONAL GOALS.STONE

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